

[The Hardy Family]

[?]

Approximately 2250 Words.

SOUTH CAROLINA WRITERS' PROJECT

LIFE HISTORY

TITLE: THE HARDY FAMILY.

Date of First Writing March 7th, 1939

Name of Person Interviewed Mrs. Roe Remington (White)

Fictitious Name Mrs. Hardy

Street Address Windermere

Place Charleston, S. C.

Occupation Housewife

Name of Writer Muriel A. Mann

Name of Reviser State Office. [???

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

Library of Congress

March 21, 1939 LIFE HISTORY. THE HARDY FAMILY.

Facing the highway, just outside an old southern city, stands an attractive modern ivy-colored brick house of English design, with an expanse of well cared for lawn in front and a lily pond and flower garden in the rear. An electrically lighted sign which reads "The [?] Windermere - Guests", stands prominently at the entrance to the driveway, advertising to passing motorists that they may find accommodations within. It is the home of Dr. and Mrs. Hardy, who, more by chance than any other reason, find themselves with a thriving tourist business.

Mrs. Hardy, a good-looking woman with a shock of dark bobbed hair, shot with gray, and snapping brown eyes, was seated in the comfortable living room telling how she happened to convert her home into a tourist's inn.

"About two years ago," she said, "the house began to feel lonely and altogether too large for two people. Our three boys, Jack, Dick, and Paul were in the north seeking their own careers, and Phyllis, our only daughter had just gotten married. We were hard pressed financially, and for the first time in my life I seemed to have time on my hands. I was seeking some new interest, something which would pay.

One day, the thought occurred to me that a number of homes along the highway were displaying tourist signs, and perhaps I too,

2

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -2- THE HARDY FAMILY.

could rent my three bedrooms occasionally and pick up a few extra dollars. So I talked it over with my husband, and as the idea met with his approval, I prepared to carry out the plan.

"From the beginning the venture was a success, and scarcely a night passed that the three bedrooms were not occupied, and, although my rates were reasonable, my bank account grow steadily, and I was thoroughly enjoying my contacts with the traveling public. It was a pleasant surprise to me.

"Only one unpleasant incident occurred. That was when one of my neighbors resented the competition so much that she employed a little colored boy to stand out in front of our house and direct all inquirers to her home. But, when the matter was brought to the attention of the county sheriff, the boy was ordered away and we were declared to be within our rights. We have not been bothered with her since.

"It was about a year after I began to rent my rooms that I happened to hear that someone was thinking of buying the vacant lot next door for the purpose of building a tourist camp. This was not a particularly agreeable thought to us, so we decided to buy it ourselves and build another house - a house which could be used to accomodate tourists now and later turned into a home for

3

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Library of Congress

Page -3- THE HARDY FAMILY.

one of the children should any of them want to return here to live. Anyway it seemed like a good investment, and if I could keep three bedrooms steadily occupied, why not more!

Mrs. Hardy got up and let in Trixy, the family pet, a little brown terrier who had been standing patiently outside the screen door for some time. Then resuming her seat, went on with her story:

"We didn't lose any time in calling in an architect and before long the plans were drawn up, the contract signed and the building under way.

"It was completed a short time ago, giving me seven more rooms to rent. Last night every room was taken and there were twenty-two people in the ten rooms. But that is almost a nightly occurrence, and I am making so much money that before long it will be possible for my husband to give up his teaching and research work at the Medical College and retire.

The new house, which stands to the side and slightly to the rear of the brick house, is Colonial in style and painted gray with deep blue shutters. The lawn has been extended across the front, and at the foot of the iron-railed steps by which you enter, a semi-circle of spring flowers will soon be a riot of color in shades of yellow and blue.

Mrs. Hardy invited me to inspect the interior, and accompanied

4

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -4- THE HARDY FAMILY.

by Trixy, we strolled across the lawn.

"I paid cash for every piece of furniture here, and expect to have the house paid for within three years at the rate I am going," she informed me. "I have tried to think always of the comfort of my guests and have bought the best springs and mattresses obtainable because I know from experience how much a comfortable night means after a day on the road."

A servant was polishing the oak floors and putting everything in order. The rooms are attractively furnished, and well designed to please the comfort loving guest.

There is a roomy two-car garage provided for each house and ample parking space, nicely graveled, which will accomodate a number of extra cars.

Strains of a Bach Prelude were coming from the little apartment over the brick house garage which is now occupied by Phyllis and her husband, who have recently returned home to live. Phyllis is an accomplished musician.

No detail seems to have been overlooked. There is even a laundry room where all the linens are washed and ironed, and there is enough work to keep a laundress employed constantly as well as a man and two maids.

Seated again in the living room, Mrs. Hardy resumed her story.

"A short time ago a woman died here. She was on her way to

5

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Library of Congress

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -5- THE HARDY FAMILY.

Florida accompanied by a companion, and had just stopped for the night. I chatted with her for a few minutes before she retired, and she seemed to be in good health and the very best of spirits. Early in the morning I heard a commotion downstairs, but thought nothing of it until my husband came in and told me that she had died in her sleep.

"Happening in our home, there was no undue excitement, as the doctor is naturally familiar with the procedure in such matters. The coroner was called and the body removed early. There was nothing more that anyone could do. But you have to be prepared for anything which occurs in this business.

"Occasionally an old college classmate of our stops by, giving us an opportunity to renew old friendships and memories, and we both like the tourist business so much that it looks now like a permanent thing.

"But times have not always been so easy or so prosperous for us," Mrs. Hardy went on. "Indeed there have been periods when the struggle for existence was far from an easy one.

"The doctor and I met when we were attending the University of Iowa from which we graduated, he in Chemistry and I in the arts' course. He obtained a position teaching chemistry at the University of North Dakota and I went to Boston to study at the Curry School of Expression. The course took three years, and after graduating I

6

Project #-1655

Library of Congress

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -6- THE HARDY FAMILY.

taught for three years at Smith College before we got married.

"We were married at my home in Minneapolis and moved to Fargo to live, and for twenty years it was a struggle to raise four children on a teacher's salary, even though I kept up my teaching and was a pioneer in the school of expression in that state.

"Our children were fairly well grown when my husband decided to go after his Ph.D. degree. He began by studying during the summer holidays towards that end. But it was very hard on him and the progress was slow in comparison, so I insisted that he resign his teaching position and devote an entire year to the work demanded for his degree, which he did, and during that time I supported the entire family with my teaching.

"It was a difficult year for the Hardy family, and it meant making many sacrifices, but we persevered, and in the end the reward was well worth the work and time it had taken, for my husband was offered a position here at the Medical College as head of the Department of Food Research, the field in which he had specialized, which meant making a new start in a new field. Not long ago he was awarded an honorary degree by one of the important colleges of the south for his discoveries in the field of research, and I feel justly proud of him.

7

Project #-1655

Library of Congress

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -7- THE HARDY FAMILY.

"Ten years have passed since coming south, ten years of ups and downs, of toil and heartaches as well as success, for it was shortly after we moved here and had bought this home, that the great depression hit the country, and for eight months not a professor at the college received a cent of pay.

"So once again I took up teaching and was able to make enough to help us over this bad time. We joined the Rotary Club and other groups and made contacts in this way. It was very discouraging at times, but we kept right on, and everything had gradually worked out as it usually does.

"Jack attended the local college the first two years we lived here and then he decided that he wanted to study chemistry in the north and graduate from a northern university. But the outlook was not very bright for we were unable to help him.

"He was undaunted, however, and packed his things, including his drums, and hitch-hiked to Ohio. When he was unable to get a job in an orchestra he washed dishes in a restaurant or waited on tables. The only trouble about being a waiter was that he had so much difficulty in remembering the orders, that sometimes the results were disastrous.

There was a gleam of pride in Mrs. Hardy's eyes as she told of her son's achievement.

"When Jack graduated he was offered an assistantship which he accepted, and after four years of teaching he won the Baker Fellowship

Library of Congress

8

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -8- THE HARDY FAMILY.

Award of \$1000.00 over competitors from every university in the country which enabled him to give up teaching and devote his time entirely to research. Now he is earning a fine salary working for the Mellon Institute, has married the girl of his choice, and is living in Dayton, Ohio.

"About five summers ago we decided that we all needed a rest, and a summer in the mountains away from the heat, would be beneficial, especially for my husband. So we rented a cottage in the mountains for the summer. Dick was in college now and Phyllis was preparing to go, too.

"It was really a rest and complete change, even though it took an awful lot of cooking to keep up with the appetites. But it paid in the end, I'm sure. Anyway, when Jack joined us, hitch-hiking down from Ohio, he brought with him a classmate and chum, Jim Ross, a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Due to the depression and being unable to find work in his field, he had decided to return to the university to get a teacher's diploma, rather than wait for something to turn up. None of the boys had any money to spare, but in spite of this we had a jolly time fishing, swimming in the mountain streams, hiking and loafing, and it was soon apparent to everybody that Jim and Phyllis were very much in love.

Library of Congress

"When our vacation was over Phyllis went off to College for

9

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -9- THE HARDY FAMILY.

three years, and Jim found a position teaching architecture in Ohio. After Phyllis graduated she and Jim married and went to live in Ohio. Phyllis kept up her music and taught, and at the end of the first year they had saved enough to take a two month trip to Europe. They had a glorious time, returning happy but broke, of course, and went to live in Alabama, Jim having accepted a position teaching there to get away from the cold northern winters. They were living there when my husband happened to hear that there was a vacancy in a local firm of architects, so he sent for Jim, and that is why they are living here now. It looks like it will be permanent, too, and Jim is happy to be working in his own field instead of teaching. They are going to have a baby next summer and are so happy about it.

"Our other boys, Dick and Paul have done well too. Dick graduated with honors from the college here and won a scholarship to the University of New York. He is a biologist and has a good position in New York. Last summer he married Phyllis' college roommate, who is also a very fine musician, and she is continuing her studies at the Juilliard School of Music.

Library of Congress

"Paul, our youngest, is at the Bryant College of Business in Providence, Rhode Island, and will finish in August. He is earning his own tuition by helping in the office and correcting English

10

Project #-1655

Muriel A. Mann

Charleston, S. C.

March 7, 1939

Page -10- THE HARDY FAMILY.

papers. For a time it was difficult for Paul to find himself. He was not happy at the college here, and after two years he decided to get a job. For eight months he worked at a wood preserving plant, and they liked him so well that he can have his job back any time he wants it. But a relative expects to find a place for him in New York when he graduates, so he will probably remain there.

Mrs. Hardy paused reflectively, and after a moment added: "Looking back over the busy years behind us, it is easy to understand why the house seemed lonely and why the demands upon our pocketbook have been so heavy, but little did we believe that we would end up in the tourist business and like it."